

## Message Text

PAGE 01 ASMARA 00050 290952Z

20

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

----- 118554

R 290700Z JAN 74

FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2461

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

S E C R E T ASMARA 0050

EXDIS

ADDIS ABABA FOR AMB AND DCM ONLY

E.O. 11652: XGDS(1)

TAGS: PGOV, PINR, ET

SUBJECT: EHTIOPIAN SUCCESSION AND OTHER POLITICAL PROBLEMS

1. IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH RAS ASRATE KASSA, PRESIDENT OF CROWN COUNCIL, HE SAID THAT IN EVENT OF HAILE SELASSIE'S DEATH IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE, SUCCESSOR ALMOST WITHOUT QUESTION WOULD BE CROWN PRINCE ASFA WOSSEN, AND THAT IF FOR ANY REASON ASFA WOSSEN (WHO WILL BE 58 THIS YEAR) SHOULD BE UNABLE TO ASSUME ROLE OF EMPEROR, THIS THEN WOULD BE ASSUMED BY HIS SON, PRINCE ZARA YAKOB. ASRATE SAID OTHER SOMETIMES HEARD CONTENDERS SUCH AS ISKENDER DESTA OR WOSSEN SEGED MAKONNEN WERE DEFINITELY OUT OF CONSIDERATION AS LONG AS HE (ASRATE) IS PRESIDENT OF CROWN COUNCIL WHICH HAS SUCCESSION ISSUE AS MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY.

2. ASRATE ACCOMPANIED CROWN PRINCE TO LONDON IN JAN. 73 FOLLOWING BLOOD CLOT AND CEREBRAL EMERGENCY, AND LATER ACCOMPANIED CP TO GENEVA, RETURNING HIMSELF TO ADDIS ABABA IN NOV. 1973. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS, ASRATE SAID CP IS REALLY MAKING GOOD RECOVERY THOUGH HE STILL HAS LONG WAY TO GO. HE SAID PARALYSIS IS GRADUALLY BEING OVERCOME AND THAT CP IS ABLE WALK UNASSISTED SHORT DISTANCES, AND HAS PROGRESSED FROM BEING ABLE TO SQUEEZE TENNIS BALL IN RIGHT HAND ELEVATED BEHIND NECK TO BEING  
SECRET

PAGE 02 ASMARA 00050 290952Z

ABLE SQUEEZE GOLF BALL. IN TERMS OF VOCAL RECOVERY, HE SAID CP HAS REGAINED ABOUT 42 PERCENT OF VOCABULARY. I ASKED WHETHER IN ENGLISH OR AMHARIC, AND HE SAID IN BOTH AS WELL AS IN FRENCH. ASRATE SAID CP ALWAYS HAS BEEN

SHY IN NATURE AND NOW IS MORE SHY THAN EVER, AND THAT WHEN STRANGERS ARE IN ROOM WITH HIM HE TENDS TO TENSE UP. I ASKED IF EMPEROR SHOULD DIE TOMORROW, WOULD CP BE ABLE TO SIT ON DIAS IN FRONT OF 150,000 EMOTIONAL ETHIOPIANS. ASRATE SAID HE COULD NOT BE SURE BUT THOUGHT CP WOULD BE ABLE TO DO SO IF HE DID NOT HAVE TO SPEAK, OR SPEAK TOO MUCH.

3. ASRATE SAID PRINCE ZARA YAKOB RECENTLY HAD BEEN MOVED FROM COLLEGE STUDIES IN CANADA TO ENGLAND WHERE ENRIONMENT IS MORE SOPHISTICATED AND MORE SUITABLE TO IMPERIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. HE SAID ZARA, WHO WILL BE 21 THIS YEAR, HAS GOOD REPUTATION, IS SOUND IN CONDUCT AND JUDGMENT, AND COULD FIT BILL IF FATHER IS UNABLE TO DO SO.

4. ASRATE HIMSELF IS MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT TREND OF WORLD AND REGIONAL EVENTS AND DIFFICULTIES CONFRONTING EHTIOPIA AND COHESION OF EMPIRE NOW AND IN FUTURE. HE SAID EMPEROR IS IN GOOD CONDITION AND EFFECTIVELY RULES IN THOSE AREAS IN WHICH HE HAS INTEREST, BUT THAT, GIVEN COMPLEXITY OF BUREAUCRACY AND RELATIVE PRIORITIES, THERE ARE REALLY TWO GOVERNMENTS, THAT OF EMPEROR AND THAT OF PRIME MINISTER, AND THAT THESE ARE NOT ALWAYS CONVERGENT. IN REGARD TO RECENT BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, AND WOOING OF ARABS, ASRATE DOUBTS SERIOUSLY THAT ETHIOPIA MAY EVER DEPEND UPON ARAB UTTERANCES OR GOOD WILL. HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE ARE AND LIKELY WILL REMAIN FUNDAMENTAL AND ANCIENT CLEAVAGES BETWEEN ETHIOPIAN AND ARAB INTERESTS, AND TRANSPITISIAN FOUNDATION OF

ETHIOPIAN EMPIRE CONFLICTS BASCIALLY WITH MOSLEM ASPIRATIONS NOT ONLY IN PAST BUT PROBABLY ALSO IN FUTURE. HE THUS WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC OF ANY PRACTICAL GAIN FROM CURRENT STANCE OF IEG, AND SAID ETHIOPIA HAD GAINED NOTHING FROM ITS LEADERSHIP OF AFRICA AWAY FROM ISRAELI CONNECTIONS AND TOWARD ARAB CONNECTIONS. ARABS HAVE SO FAR DONE NOTHING AND PROMISED NOTHING TO ASSIST  
SECRET

PAGE 03 ASMARA 00050 290952Z

ECONOMICALLY, OR POLITICALLY IN TERMS OF ELF AND SOMALIA PROBLEMS. IN FACT, HE SAID SINCE BREAK WITH ISRAEL, LIBYA HAS COMMITTED PUBLICLY INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ELF (10 MILLION POUNDS STERLIN ACCORDING TO RECENT LONDON TIMES ARTICLE).

5. ASRATE IS EXCEPTIONALLY ASTUTE AND SOPHISTICATED POLITICIAN. HE IS UNHAPPY WITH WEAKNESSES AND INADEQUACIES OF PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET IN NOT VIGOROUSLY ADDRESSING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONT ETHIOPIA, AND I GAINED IMPRESSION THAT IF ASRATE WERE PRIME MINISTER, CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MORE VIGOROUS AND MORE EFFECTIVE.

RABIDA

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 27 JUL 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLITICAL SITUATION  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 29 JAN 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974ASMARA00050  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** 11652 XGDS(1)  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** P750001-1068  
**From:** ASMARA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740175/abbrzbxy.tel  
**Line Count:** 112  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS ONLY  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS ONLY  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** golinofr  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 19 JUN 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <19 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <20 DEC 2002 by golinofr>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** EHTHIOPIAN SUCCESSION AND OTHER POLITICAL PROBLEMS  
**TAGS:** PGOV, PINR, ET  
**To:** STATE INFO ADDIS ABABA  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005